PROSPERITY ■ INTEGRITY ■ EQUITY
PLAN TUCSON
TUCSON GENERAL PLAN UNDERWAY

Environmental Integrity Focus Area

Water Resources Element

BACKGROUND

This working document presents draft goals and policies which emerged from Water Resources stakeholder working group meetings during the Fall of 2011. The Water Resources Element focuses on water demand, water supply and water quality. As the largest municipal water provider in the area, Tucson Water can play an important role in assuring the supply and quality of Tucson's water resources.

Since settlement of the Tucson basin began, inhabitants have depended on the same underground water resource. Regional growth and development have resulted in a significant lowering of the water table, with economic and environmental consequences. Competition for limited groundwater has necessitated finding new water resources and has resulted in water management guidelines. One of the important water goals of the community is attainment of safe yield, when no more water is withdrawn from the aquifer than is replenished.

The City engaged in a regional, collaborative water planning effort with Pima County which resulted in the City/County Water and Wastewater Study and Action Plan in 2009 and the Phase II Final Report in 2010. The purpose of the Study was to improve City/County collaboration on water planning and to develop a regional approach to a sustainable water future.

GOALS FOR WATER RESOURCES

I. Protect and manage Tucson's water resources to ensure high water quality
II. Manage Tucson's water supply for long-term sustainability
III. Prioritize water use for long-term regional sustainability
IV. Pursue integrated planning

POLICIES FOR EACH WATER RESOURCE GOAL

I. Protect and manage Tucson's water resources to ensure high water quality

A. Require that building, development, landscape, maintenance, and land use practices support improved water quality
B. Reduce storm water runoff and associated pollution through greater use of low impact development strategies
C. Promote the development and use of innovative technologies by public and private sectors to ensure water quality
D. Educate the public on ways to improve water quality and reduce water contamination
E. Ensure safe drinking water for all residents
F. Establish water quality standards for riparian projects
G. Impose requirements and penalties on industrial and commercial entities that contaminate groundwater

H. Ensure that Tucson Water has the financial resources to effectively monitor, mitigate and manage water quality

II. Manage Tucson's water supply for long-term sustainability

A. Support water conservation efforts in the public, residential, commercial and industrial sectors
B. Provide incentives for water saving activities such as rainwater harvesting, grey water use, high efficiency appliances and repair of leaking pipes
C. Expand the use of effluent and other renewable water supplies
D. Work collaboratively to identify additional water sources
E. Reduce the use of groundwater for non-potable uses
F. Require greater groundwater recharge in areas of withdrawal
G. Prepare for changes in water availability that may result from long-term drought and climate change
H. Revise building codes to facilitate the use of alternate water supplies in new and existing construction
I. Create multi-use detention basins for groundwater recharge and environmental health
J. Encourage low impact development best management practices at all scales
K. Ensure that new development pays the full cost of new water service
L. Ensure basic water access for all residents in the Tucson Water service area, regardless of residents' financial resources
M. Consider use of rainwater harvesting to ensure adequate sewer flows
N. Decrease the amount of impervious surfaces in the City
O. Expand public education about water priorities and conservation strategies
P. Ensure adequate resources for the maintenance and construction of priority water infrastructure

III. Prioritize water use for long-term regional sustainability

A. Prioritize water use across sectors based on identified City policy directives
B. Balance human and environmental water needs
C. Revise water rates to support identified water use priorities
D. Consider aquifer health when making water service area decisions
E. Review impact of water pumping strategies on riparian health

IV. Pursue integrated planning

A. Leverage and build upon existing collaborative, regional water planning efforts as a cost effective approach to policy development
B. Integrate planning for land use, energy, and water resources
C. Engage the community in extensive dialogue about water priorities and policies
D. Align water policy with climate change mitigation and adaptation planning
E. Establish regional water efficiency and conservation goals